



Partners in Population and Development
A South-South Initiative

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**Remarks by Sethuramiah Rao,
Permanent Observer of Partners in Population and Development (PPD)**

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Madam Chair,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you, Madam Chair, for giving me the opportunity to make a few remarks on behalf of the Partners in Population and Development (PPD). As many of you know, PPD is an intergovernmental alliance of 25 developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America, committed to the promotion of South-South Cooperation in the areas of population dynamics, reproductive health, gender and development.

Today, poverty eradication is the overarching objective of development. According to the Secretary General's Report on Poverty Eradication (E/CN.5/2011/3), although the MDG target of halving the proportion of people living on less than \$1.25 a day is expected to be met by 2015 at the global level, there will still be close to one billion people who will remain poor. Furthermore, PPD recognizes, like others, that poverty reduction is much more than just meeting the target of income poverty of \$1.25 a day. Poverty is multi-faceted; it implies among other things, lack of income, employment and productive resources, presence of hunger and malnutrition, limited access to education, health, especially reproductive health and other basic services, as well as social exclusion, marginalization, inequalities and lack of participation. Thus, poverty reduction strategy would necessitate a comprehensive approach aimed at addressing manifestations of poverty, as well as root causes of poverty.

Population dynamics in many poorer developing countries, especially the Least Developed Countries, are often characterized by high fertility, rapid population growth, high infant, child and maternal mortality, a preponderance of infectious, parasitic and respiratory diseases and very high proportions of young dependents in the population and as is well-known, they are inextricably linked with poverty. Experience has shown that family planning, as an integral component of reproductive health, is an important measure that can improve maternal health, reduce maternal mortality, slow population growth, dampen poverty and contribute to economic development. Family planning lowers fertility, reduces young age dependency and opens up a window of opportunity for greater investments in the social and

economic sectors, leading to a demographic bonus. But, current global investments in family planning and reproductive health are woefully inadequate.

Madam Chair,

PPD Alliance is a group of developing countries with, among other features, a diversity of experiences in demographic and poverty transitions. For instance, it has countries with relatively low levels of fertility, mortality and population growth rates, as well as countries at earlier stages of demographic transition; it contains countries that have succeeded to an extent in reducing levels of poverty, as well as countries that are facing formidable challenges to poverty reduction; it includes countries facing aging of population, as well as countries that are challenged by high proportions of very young dependents. And so on. PPD Alliance thus serves as a good platform to share lessons learned in successes achieved, as well as obstacles faced by member countries. It is well suited for a useful exchange of learning experiences.

PPD is therefore encouraging south-south cooperation activities in its member countries through training and capacity building, through knowledge sharing by documenting good or innovative practices in population and reproductive health, and through information exchange, policy dialogue and advocacy for population, reproductive health and development, with the support of United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). As Argentina speaking on behalf of G-77, Chile on behalf of the Rio Group, Indonesia on behalf of ASEAN, as well as China and Russian Federation have all emphasized at this session of the Commission, South-South Cooperation can be expected to play increasingly a more important role in the future.

In closing, Madam Chair, the Partners in Population and Development would like to emphasize the interrelatedness of social development issues and poverty with population dynamics and reproductive health. In this regard, PPD believes that to help achieve poverty reduction, it would be necessary, among other things, to achieve the MDG target of universal access to reproductive health, including the provision of quality family planning services, address girls' education, promote gender equality and women's empowerment, and create meaningful employment for the young people, as well as tackle inequalities and ensure social protection for the vulnerable.

Thank you, Madame Chair for your attention.